

BALTIMORE, MD.

SUN

M-190,628

E-213,008

S-330,420

MAR 23 1966

Komer Named To Oversee Reconstruction In Vietnam

By PHILIP POTTER

(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, March 22 — President Johnson today named Robert W. Komer, who has been on McGeorge Bundy's staff in the White House a \$30,000-a-year special assistant to push reconstruction programs in Vietnam.

Announcing this today at an impromptu news conference, the President said Komer would fly to Saigon next Tuesday with Cyrus Vance, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Bill D. Moyers, White House press secretary, to meet with Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and Gen. William Westmoreland and other top officials to expedite the flow of manpower and supplies to get reconstruction projects underway.

To Work With Top Officials

He said Komer would be working closely with Dean Rusk, Secretary of State; Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense; David E. Bell, administrator of the Agency for International Development and Leonard Marks, director of the United States Information Agency to coordinate activities in the field with Administration efforts here.

The President, responding to a question on his attitude toward the admission of Red China to the United Nations, said he shared the desire of those urging more contacts and exchanges with Peking, but that Red China itself had shown no interest.

"She hangs up the telephone," Mr. Johnson said.

Refers To Scholars' Views

"Until there is some change on China's part, I doubt that these academic discussions will do much more than satisfy peoples yearning for information."

Mr. Johnson was alluding to testimony by scholars on China and others before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and its House counterpart urging a greater United States effort to draw the Peking regime into world society.

Rusk, the President said, had stated the United States position with respect to Red China's admission to the United Nations "very thoroughly" in a television interview he gave last Sunday over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Cites Two Chinas Idea

The Secretary of State avoided condemning proposals by various academicians that Peking be seated without displacement of the representatives of the Nationalist Government, but noted that both Chinese governments reject the idea, and said it would cause "major charter problems."

Vice President Humphrey's description several days ago of United States policy toward the Peking regime as one of "containment without necessarily isolation," was described by Rusk as "a very shorthand way of saying it."

He then cited unsuccessful attempts by the United States to probe the Chinese on such subjects as efforts to win freedom for Americans held on the Chinese mainland, a renunciation of force in the Formosa Strait and on exchanges of newsmen, physicians and scholars and of weather information.

At meetings with Peking representatives in Warsaw, 129 of which have been held over the past decade, Rusk said, all such probes invariably met with the Chinese statement that the cession of Formosa was a first condition.

Blames Chinese Position

Mr. Johnson said today he had watched with "interest and complete understanding" the testimony before congressional committees on the subject of China.

It was "very good," he said, "to have the opinion of these professors and experts and ambassadors and other people, but 'as far as I am aware, it is not the position of this country that

"It is China's own position.

"We are very anxious to try to have more contact with her Vietnam, the President said, were and more exchanges with her, but as has been explained by all of these people, she hangs up the phone."

President Johnson said in response to another question that reports from the front in Vietnam "are good," but added a cautionary note.

"We must not be too optimistic and we must not exaggerate what is taking place," he said.

Troop Morale Praised

Introducing reserve Maj. Gen. James E. Rudder, president of Texas A & M., whom he described as a Brady (Texas) rancher and "old friend," Mr. Johnson said he had just returned from Vietnam as a member of the mission headed by John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Rudder, the President said, had described American troop morale in Vietnam as the highest and the combat effectiveness the best he had ever seen.

"He never saw better coordination, thought it was absolutely marvelous, unbelievable, that you could move 200,000-odd men that far, that fast, that effectively. . . ."

"Fond Of Vietnamese"

"He said they had had a wonderful effect on the Vietnamese, and that the boys felt they had a mission and they were fond of the Vietnamese people and were working very well together. He said they would protect themselves during the day and advance and take the valleys and spend the evenings trying to fix up the schools and teach the children."

Dr. James Cain of the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minn., Johnson family friend and physician, also a member of the Gardner mission, had reported that even American wounded were eager to get back into combat, the President said.

Cain, Mr. Johnson said, had visited with 30 United States wounded, some in "terrible shape" but had reported that probably all would live because of the excellence and promptness of medical care provided, with possibly

His own letters from soldiers in Vietnam, the President said, were one of his "greatest sources of strength" and he customarily called for a batch "so I can cheer up" after reading depressing newspaper columns about "how everything has gone bad."

To Work In Washington

Explaining Komer's new post as that of working in Washington to further the efforts in the field of William Porter, Ambassador Lodge's deputy, who will head the civil phase of American activities in Vietnam, Mr. Johnson said the pair would have at their disposal the nation's "best experts" in education, health, agriculture and general productivity to make a go of "peaceful construction" in Vietnam.

"We are trying to concentrate our energies and all of our expertise and knowledge to help these people help themselves and have a better way of life," the President said.

Komer, a Harvard graduate who served in Italy as a intelligence officer, has worked since the war in the Central Intelligence Agency and on the National Security Council staffs. He was one of the top assistants to Bundy, who retired last month, as special assistant for national security affairs. Komer has specialized heretofore in India-Pakistan problems.

At Top Echelon

His promotion to a \$30,000 salary brings him to the top echelon of the White House staff.

His trip to Vietnam will follow the President's meeting next week with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India.

Today Mr. Johnson lunched with the Indian Ambassador, B. K. Nehru, arranging the agenda for the visit, which, the President said, will deal with plans to promote the peace and prosperity on the subcontinent.

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